

COWBRIDGE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

This policy reflects the process of consultation and discussion on this issue undertaken during the Spring of 2007.

Stake holders included in the consultation included:

- pupils through the mechanism of Year and School Council;
- school governors;
- members of the school's staff;
- parents;
- Cowbridge Youth Service;
- LEA officers.

Values and Principles

It is a basic entitlement of all pupils at Cowbridge Comprehensive School to engage in their everyday activities and education free from humiliation, oppression and abuse. It is expected that all members of the school community will actively work to identify, report and tackle incidents of bullying.

What is bullying?

Bullying can be described as:

- direct discrimination;
- a wilful desire to hurt, threaten or frighten somebody, either physically or verbally;
- any behaviour which is an abuse of power in order to hurt others;
- the use of aggression with the intention of hurting another person. Bullying results in pain and distress to the victim;
- a pattern of behaviour rather than an isolated incident.

Forms of bullying

Bullying can occur in the following ways:

- Physical – pushing, punching, kicking etc.
- Verbal – name calling, teasing, sarcasm. It may be directed towards appearance, gender, ethnic origin, disability, personality etc.
- Theft of or damage to property – create fear and use power improperly.
- Manipulative – uses social networks to exclude individuals, spread rumours, sending malicious e-mails or text messages on mobile phones.

What are the signs of bullying?

The effects can manifest as:

- depression, becomes withdrawn, lacks confidence;
- low self esteem;

- truancy, lateness;
- isolation;
- academic underachievement;
- lack of concentration;
- threatened suicide.
- possessions go missing or are damaged;
- changes usual routine;
- fear of travelling to school.

Strategies for the school.

Bullying at Cowbridge Comprehensive School is addressed as a whole school issue. This includes awareness raising, actively involving pupils in drawing up definitions and seeking solutions, curricular work, work on the school environment and on acceptable and non acceptable behaviours. It is hoped that through the raft of preventative measures in place and the climate of positive concern being promoted, bullying can be greatly reduced.

A number of key points underpin this policy and are followed:

- we never assume that bullying does not happen in school;
- we never ignore suspected bullying;
- we do not make premature assumptions;
- we listen carefully to all accounts – several pupils saying the same thing does not necessarily mean they are telling the truth;
- we try to adopt a problem solving approach which moves pupils on from justifying themselves;
- we will follow up repeatedly, checking that bullying has not resumed.

Bullying and its effects will be exemplified, reinforced and tackled through many areas of the curriculum e.g. PHSE, Drama, RS and through assemblies. External theatre groups are used to focus pupils' minds on the issue. This is designed to promote positive confident relationships and self esteem.

Other strategies used by the school will include:

- giving a strong ethos in school promoting tolerance and respect for difference and diversity;
- providing training for all staff members to raise and maintain awareness including new staff;
- periodic consultation with pupils to find out what bullying occurs, when, where, by whom;
- publicising outside organisations such as Child Line who can offer help to pupils who are being bullied;
- ensure there are confidential and varied means of alerting the school to current bullying;
- ensure efficient patrolling of the school by staff, especially toilets, lunch queues and secluded areas;

- attempt to break down age group isolation e.g. reading scheme, 6th Form mentoring scheme;
- investigate and further develop the 6th Form mentoring system;
- investigate and implement a peer support and or “buddying” or “befriending” system in school to involve all year groups (see action plan).
- prompt and thorough investigation of incidents, including contact with parents of the bullied child and children exhibiting bullying behaviour in order to agree a course of action.

Procedures

Any bullying incident must be reported. Bullying can only be tackled effectively if we know there is a problem. Pupils who are being bullied or other pupils who know or suspect that someone else is being bullied can report problems via “Bully Boxes” in Lower and Middle School. These will be checked on a daily basis by Heads of Year and will be acted upon. Alternatively the issue can be reported to a 6th Form mentor if appropriate, Form Teacher, Head of Year or any other adult a pupil feels comfortable in talking to. The school can also be contacted by letter or e mail. All contact will be treated as confidential.

If the report of bullying is from a parent then the victim’s Head of Year should be the first point of contact.

It would be helpful in these circumstances if parents could:

- try to stay calm;
- be as specific as possible about what has happened;
- make note of what action the school intends to take;
- ask if there is anything that that they can do to help their child at school;
- stay in touch with the school.

It would be helpful in a general sense if parents would encourage children to be friendly and tolerant to others and not aggressive.

Step 1

The person receiving the complaint will keep a written record of the conversation. The incident **must** be referred to the appropriate Head of Year in the first instance. If necessary the victim will be interviewed by the appropriate member of staff. A written record will be kept. The Head of Year and any staff who subsequently deal with the issue must complete and maintain accurate records. These sheets should be signed and dated.

The alleged bully will be interviewed separately. A written record will be kept.

Any witnesses will be interviewed and a written record will be kept.

In the event of a complaint being upheld parents of both parties will be informed. Coping strategies with the victim will be discussed to avoid the situation. Reassurance will be offered. The bully will be counselled by staff members, told to stop and given an official warning. The underlying cause of any bullying will be discussed. This will

be recorded. The bully will be informed of the procedures that will take place should the incident occur again.

Step 2

If the behaviour is repeated the bully's parents will be invited into school to discuss the situation. The pupil will be placed "on report" and an after school detention will follow. All teachers will be alerted to the problem.

Step 3

Any repetition of this behaviour will result in "inclusion" with the pupil working in isolation from his/ her peers.

The school may access the Learning Support department and outside agencies along with parents to attempt to correct behaviour.

In cases of severe and persistent bullying exclusion from school may follow.

Victims will need to be reassured that any repercussions will lead to sanctions being applied against the bully.

These procedures do not cut across, compromise or pre-empt the right of the parents or victim to make a direct complaint to the police.

Some of the above steps may be bypassed dependent on the specific nature of the case.

Development, Monitoring and Review

This policy will be introduced with effect from September 2007. Some of the specific strategies outlined need further investigation and work before implementation – specifically the area of mentoring and buddying or befriending. This issue will be addressed in Autumn 2007.

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis in the June of each academic year. This process will involve pupils, members of staff and governors.